



News Release

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Increase in reports of mosquito-borne viral diseases among returning travelers *Travelers urged to protect themselves from destination-based illness risks*

OLYMPIA -- More Washingtonians are returning home with mosquito-borne viral illnesses after exposure during their travels. So far in 2015, disease investigators from the Washington State Department of Health have received double the reports of viral illnesses spread by mosquitoes compared to previous years.

Several popular travel destinations in Mexico, the Caribbean, Central and South America, and the Big Island of Hawaii are currently experiencing outbreaks of mosquito-borne viral diseases. There are no outbreak-related travel restrictions to these destinations; however, travelers should be aware of the risks for mosquito-borne disease.

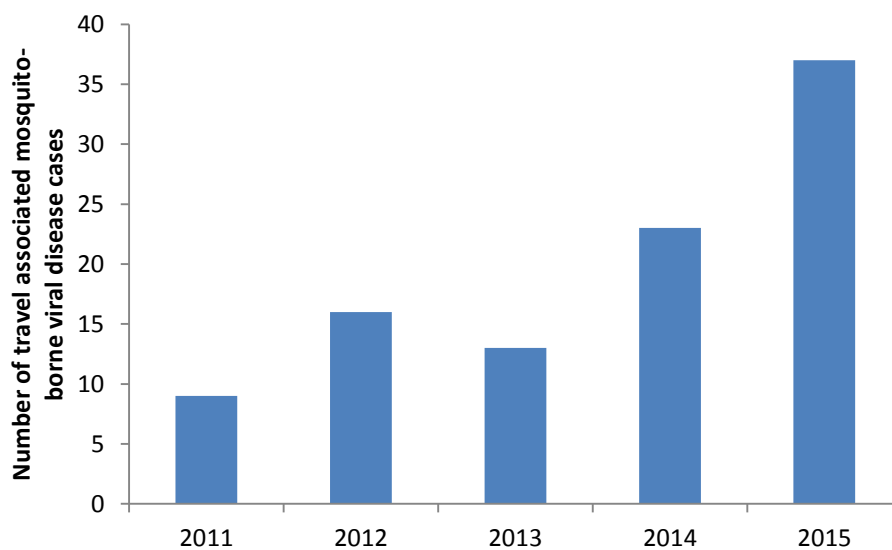
The 37 mosquito-borne viral illness cases reported so far in 2015 were caused by dengue and chikungunya viruses, but mosquitoes can spread many other disease-causing viruses and parasites too. Knowing which diseases are circulating in the area you plan to travel to can help you know how to protect yourself. The [CDC Traveler's Health website](#) provides updates on regional disease risks and outbreaks, as well as recommendations for medications or vaccinations by country.

Symptoms of mosquito-borne viral diseases may include fever, headache, rash, muscle pain, or joint pain. For a small percentage of people, infection with these viruses can be very serious, resulting in encephalitis, meningitis, or other complications.

Travel can be a safe, healthy and enjoyable activity, but it is important to [protect yourself and your family from mosquito-borne disease while traveling](#). Avoiding mosquito bites is the best prevention for mosquito-borne disease; try to keep mosquitoes out of your hotel room or lodging, cover up bare skin, and use an [EPA-registered insect repellent](#). Choose a hotel or lodging with air

conditioning or screens on windows and doors, or sleep under a mosquito bed net if sleeping outside. Before you leave home you can treat clothes with specific [EPA-registered repellent](#) made for use on clothes for extra protection. Follow insect repellent label instructions, especially when applying on children.

The Washington State Department of Health continues to track mosquito-borne diseases in travelers returning to Washington; these diseases include dengue, chikungunya, malaria, West Nile virus disease, yellow fever, Japanese encephalitis, and many others.



The [Department of Health website](#) (doh.wa.gov) is your source for *a healthy dose of information*. Also, [find us on Facebook](#) and [follow us on Twitter](#).

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